

OFFENSIVE AND DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

Subcourse Number IN0760

EDITION B

UNITED STATES ARMY INFANTRY SCHOOL
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA 31905-5593

4 CREDIT HOURS

Edition Date: June 1996

SUBCOURSE OVERVIEW

This subcourse is designed to teach you the fundamentals followed in conducting offensive and defensive operations.

There are no prerequisites for this subcourse.

This subcourse reflects the doctrine which was current at the time it was prepared. In your own work situation, always refer to the latest publications.

The word "he", him", "his," and "men" when used in this publication, represent both the masculine and feminine genders unless otherwise stated.

TERMINAL LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Action: List the considerations necessary for offensive and defensive operations.

Condition: Given the subcourse contained this subcourse.

Standard: You must correctly answer 70 percent of the questions on a multiple-choice test covering the subcourse material.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Subcourse Overview

<u>Lesson 1:</u>	Considerations for Offensive Operations
<u>Part A:</u>	Characteristics of the Offense
<u>Part B:</u>	Types of Offensive Operations
<u>Part C:</u>	The Five Forms of Maneuver
<u>Part D:</u>	The Four Phases of Offensive Operations
<u>Part E:</u>	Main and Supporting Attacks
<u>Part F:</u>	Sequence of the Attack
	<u>Practice Exercise</u>

<u>Lesson 2:</u>	Considerations for Defensive Operations
<u>Part A:</u>	Purposes of Defensive Operations
<u>Part B:</u>	Characteristics of Defensive Operations
<u>Part C:</u>	Alternate Defensive Patterns
<u>Part D:</u>	The Framework of the Defense
<u>Part E:</u>	Combat Support and Combat Service Support Assets
<u>Part F:</u>	Defensive Capabilities of Light and Mechanized Infantry
<u>Part G:</u>	Operational Security Measures for the Defense
	<u>Practice Exercise</u>

Lesson 1

CONSIDERATIONS FOR OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

OVERVIEW

Lesson Description:

In this lesson you will identify the fundamentals of offensive operation. These doctrinal foundations apply to both light and mechanized forces from company to brigade size. Subject areas include: types, characteristics and phases of offensive operations; the purposes and sequence of tacks; and the various forms of maneuver employed by infantry units.

Terminal Learning Objective:

Action: Identify the fundamentals of offensive operations.

Condition: Given the subcourse material contained in this lesson.

Standard: You must correctly answer 70 percent or higher of the questions on a multiple-choice test covering the lesson material.

Reference: The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications:

[FM 7-7](#)

[FM 7-10](#)

[FM 7-20](#)

[FM 71-1](#)

[FM 71-2](#)

[FM 71-3](#)

[FM 100-5](#)

[FM 101-5-1](#)

INTRODUCTION

The object of battle is to win. To win, one must attack. The attacker must identify the decisive point in the enemy's defense, choose a form of maneuver which avoids the enemies strength, and concentrate the effects of his combat power against the decisive point.

PART A

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OFFENSE

Successful offensive operations, whatever their purpose, are characterized by surprise, concentration, speed, flexibility, and audacity.

NOTE: The terms battalion and task force may be used interchangeably throughout this lesson.

1. Surprise. Surprise is achieved by striking the enemy at a time or place or in a manner for which he is unprepared. The enemy may learn of the attack--but he must do so too late to react effectively.
 - a. Shock. The shock of an unexpected attack slows enemy reactions, overloads his command and control system, and reduces the effectiveness of his weapons. This allows the attacker to quickly overcome the defender.
 - b. Initiative. Initiative is the setting or changing the terms of battle by action. The attacker's initiative allows him to choose the time, place, and means of battle. Surprise is enhanced by

striking the enemy's flank or rear, by infiltrating, or by rapidly and unexpectedly inserting combat forces to the enemy's rear.

c. Exploit. The shock of surprise is brief, so the attacker must exploit it and deny the enemy time to regain his equilibrium.

2. Concentration. Concentration of the unit's combat power on the enemy at the point of attack is required.

a. Protection. The lethality of modern weapons--especially artillery and NBC weapons--increases the threat to massed formations. The attacker must avoid patterns or obvious movements that reveal the time or direction of its attack. Tactical mobility, security, deception, and proper use of terrain and weather are vital to success. Other ways to concentrate the effects of the battalion's weapons on the enemy include the following:

(1) Designate Main Effort. Designate the main effort, focus the resources to support it, and prepare to shift it rapidly.

(2) Synchronize. Synchronization is the arrangement of battlefield activities in time, space, and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at the decision point. Further discussion can be found in [FM 7-20](#). Synchronize direct fires, indirect fires, and combat air support (CAS). Weight the main effort with indirect fire assets, aviation, or CAS, which can be shifted rapidly as the situation changes.

(3) Integrate. Integrate combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) assets. Organize and coordinate support in detail to give the unit the sustainment required for success.

b. Reconnaissance and Surveillance(R&S). R&S are important to allow the attacker to focus the combat power of his weapons on the weakness of the enemy. R&S can be friendly or enemy oriented. See [FM 7-20](#) for greater detail.

3. Speed. Speed is vital to infantry offensive operations. Speed can prevent the enemy from using effective countermeasures. Speed and surprise together compensate for a lack of mass; they deny the enemy the time to recover or to identify the main effort and react effectively.

a. Speed Versus Haste. Speed must not be confused with haste. General Patton, who stressed the use of time in all his operations, carefully distinguished haste from speed.

"Haste exists," he wrote, "when troops are committed without proper reconnaissance, without the arrangement for proper supporting fire, and before every available man has been brought up. The result of such an attack will be to get the troops into action early, but to complete the action very slowly.

"Speed is acquired by making the necessary reconnaissance, providing proper artillery and other tactical support, including air support, bringing up every man, and then launching the attack with a plan so that time under fire will be reduced to a minimum. At battalion level, four hours spent in preparation for an attack will probably ensure the time spent under fire will not exceed

thirty minutes. One hour spent in...preparation...will most certainly ensure time under fire lasting many hours with bloody casualties."

b. Speed Can Be Attained In Many Ways.

(1) Training, C2, and Mission Orders. Training and an effective command and control that translates mental agility into decisive, quick action are needed. Mission-type orders at all echelons allow subordinates to use enemy weaknesses created by the rapid-tempo attack.

(2) Mobility, Planning, and Intelligence. Tactical mobility is enhanced by the use of movement techniques, formations, and drills that allow the force to move and react rapidly and use the terrain. Proper planning for the use of engineer, air defense, and aviation assets increases tactical mobility. Good reconnaissance and intelligence collection are vital.

(3) Logistics. Responsive logistical support results in rapid resupply. This ensures the attack can continue.

4. Flexibility. Flexibility is a trait required of commanders. Combat requires that they expect uncertainties. To develop flexibility, detailed war-gaming is critical. War-gaming is detailed in [FM 7-20](#). The following also increase unit flexibility.

- a. Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB). IPB is conducted to learn the terrain and enemy dispositions for initial and subsequent actions. [FM 7-20](#) explains IPB in detail.
- b. Reconnaissance. Conducting continuous reconnaissance to discover enemy weaknesses and ways to attack him on the flank and rear.
- c. Reserve. Maintaining a reserve that can assume the mission of the main attack or exploit tactical opportunities.
- d. Command and Control. Establishing a command and control (C2) system that allows the commander to make and transmit timely decisions.
- e. Intent. Communicating the commander's intent by mission type orders and fragmentary orders (FRAGO).

5. Audacity. Audacity is the willingness to risk bold action to achieve positive results. The audacious commander is daring, confident, and original--he is not rash.

- a. Reasoned Approach. The audacious commander's actions, though quick and decisive, are based on a reasoned approach to the tactical problem and his knowledge of soldiers, terrain, and enemy. This commander maneuvers to maintain a positional advantage over the enemy. He seeks to attack the enemy on the flank or rear, and exploits success at once, even if this briefly exposes his flanks. He issues mission-type orders and moves to the place on the battlefield where he can best influence the critical aspects of the attack.
- b. "Indirect Approach". Boldness and willingness to accept calculated risk have always been the keystones of successful offensive action. The concept of combat power is more than the sum

of a force's combat system. Audacious commanders throughout history have used the "indirect approach." To defeat a numerically superior opponent, they strike at an unexpected time and place.

PART B

TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

The five types of major offensive operations are:

- Movement to contact.
- Hasty attack.
- Deliberate attack.
- Exploitation.
- Pursuit.

1. Movement to Contact. A movement to contact is an offensive operation conducted to gain or reestablish contact with the enemy. Its purpose is also to develop the tactical situation. To maintain flexibility and security when moving to contact, the battalion makes contact with the smallest element possible. This is most important to infantry battalions due to their limited mobility and dependence on restricted terrain. Two of the techniques used most commonly by infantry battalions to conduct a movement to contact are the approach march technique and the search-and-attack technique.

a. Approach March Technique. The approach march is an advance of a combat unit when direct contact with the enemy is imminent. Troops are fully or partially deployed. The approach march ends when ground contact with the enemy is made or when an attack position is occupied. The approach march technique is the "conventional" technique for conducting movement to contact. Using this technique, battalions usually organize into a security force, advance guard, main body, flank guard, and a rear guard (See [Figure 1-1](#)). These guarding elements move with and secure the main body.

(1) Planning Considerations. The unit should be assigned an axis of advance or a zone. A march objective is assigned to orient movement. The commander selects routes for the approach march based on IPB, which provide cover and concealment but allow for contact with the enemy. Guard forces are used for all-around security. A detailed discussion is provided in [FM 7-20](#).

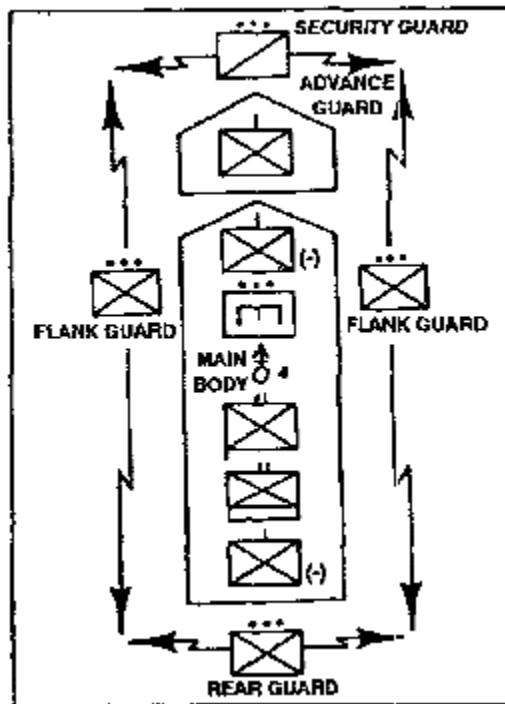


Figure 1-1. Single Battalion in March Column.

(2) Organization. The battalion organizes into a security force, advance guard, main body, flank guards, and rear guards when it is conducting movement to contact alone. Units should be close enough together so that units can rapidly come to the aid of the unit ahead. However, they should be far enough apart that enemy fire falling on the leading unit does not limit the trailing unit's ability to maneuver. Support assets are used in the same manner as with search-and-attack, with a some exceptions. A detailed discussion of the employment of maneuver, CS, and CSS assets is outlined in [FM 7-20](#).

- Security Forces. The battalion can employ more reconnaissance and security (R&S) forces to the front and flanks during an approach march. Depending on METT-T, security forces operate two to six kilometers forward of the battalion advance guard. Once they find the enemy, the security force should remain oriented on him. The primary responsibility for finding the enemy is normally given to the scout platoon. A discussion of the scout platoon's role in the security force can be found in [FM 7-20](#).
- Advance Guard. The advance guard operates one to two kilometers ahead of the main body. It attempts to develop the enemy situation, provide for the uninterrupted advance of the main body, protect the main body from surprise, and cover the deployment of the main body if it is committed to action (See [Figure 1-2](#)). Additional details concerning the duties and actions of the advance guard can be found in [FM 7-20](#).

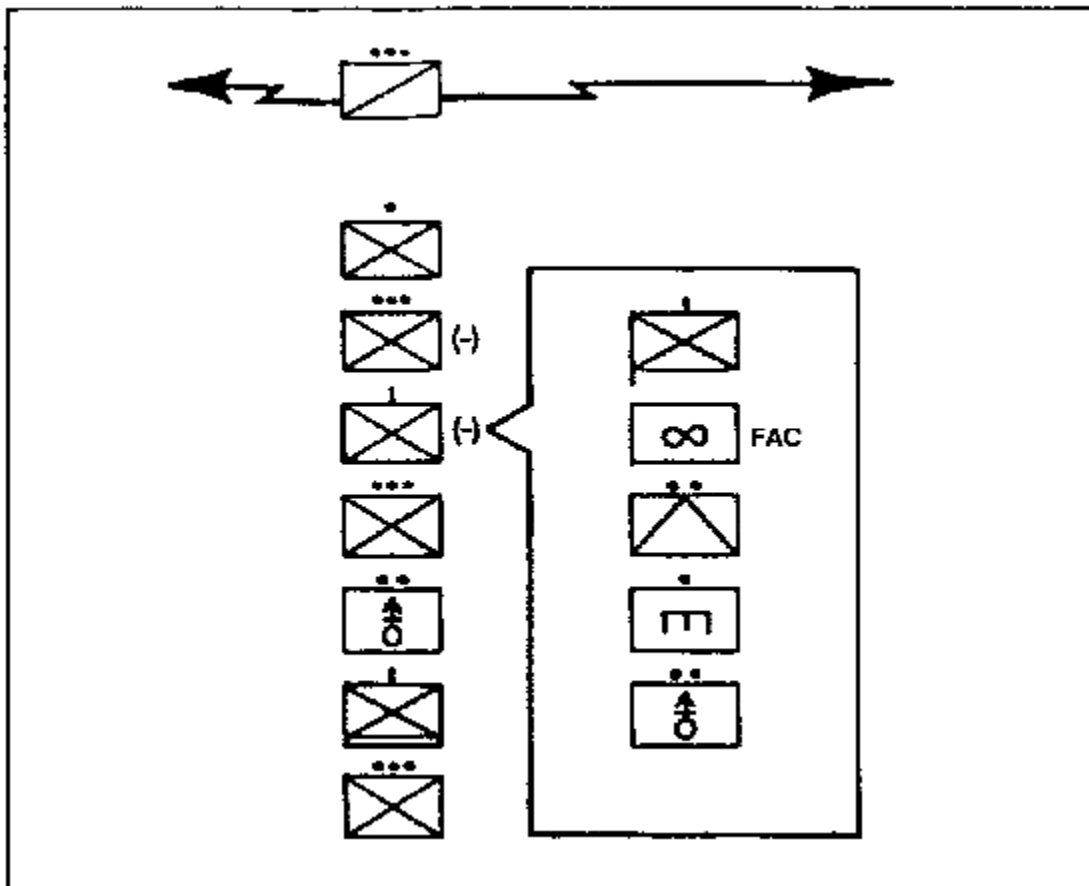


Figure 1-2. Organization of an Advance Guard

- Flank and Rear Guards. Flank and rear guards are designated when enemy contact on an approach march is possible. Their detailed functions and responsibilities are explained in [FM 7-20](#).
 - Main Body. The main body comprises most of the battalion force when the battalion moves to contact. The main body maintains local security while attempting to balance conservation of the unit's fighting strength with the need for march discipline and security. More detail can be found in [FM 7-20](#).
- b. Conduct of the Approach March. The battalion should follow several guidelines during movement.
- (1) Contact. The battalion makes contact with the smallest force possible.
 - (2) Movement Technique. The commander selects the movement technique based on the likelihood of enemy contact and the speed of movement desired.
 - (3) Columns. The commander visualizes how his force will be deployed when contact is made and moves it accordingly.
 - Single Column. A single column is used for ease of control or when the terrain permits movement on one axis only.

- Multiple Columns. Multiple columns allow greater security to the flank, are more rapidly deployed, and allow mutual support.

(4) Other Factors. Other factors must also be considered, even though a single column is easier to control than multiple columns. A strongly reinforced battalion may be forced to move in multiple columns, the enemy situation may require movement in a particular configuration, a wide zone may favor multiple columns, while the availability of routes may also dictate the movement technique selected.

c. Search and Attack. This decentralized movement-to-contact technique requires multiple, coordinated patrols (battalions use squad-sized and platoon-sized) to locate the enemy. It is most often used in low intensity conflict against an enemy operating in dispersed elements. When conducting a search and attack, units can expect to spend more time operating in an area of operations rather than just "sweeping" through it. Search and attack can be conducted for many reasons. (FMs 7-10 and 7-20 provide more information on search and attack.)

(1) Purposes. The commander's concept focuses the battalion on one or more of the following:

- Destruction of the enemy.
- Area denial.
- Force protection.
- Information collection.

(2) Tasks. Search and attack operations can be conducted in a company-sized or battalion-sized area of operations (See [Figures 1-3](#) and [1-4](#)). The unit can be tasked--

- To locate enemy positions or routes.
- To fix, block, or destroy enemy forces within its capability.
- To maintain surveillance of a larger force until reinforcements arrive.

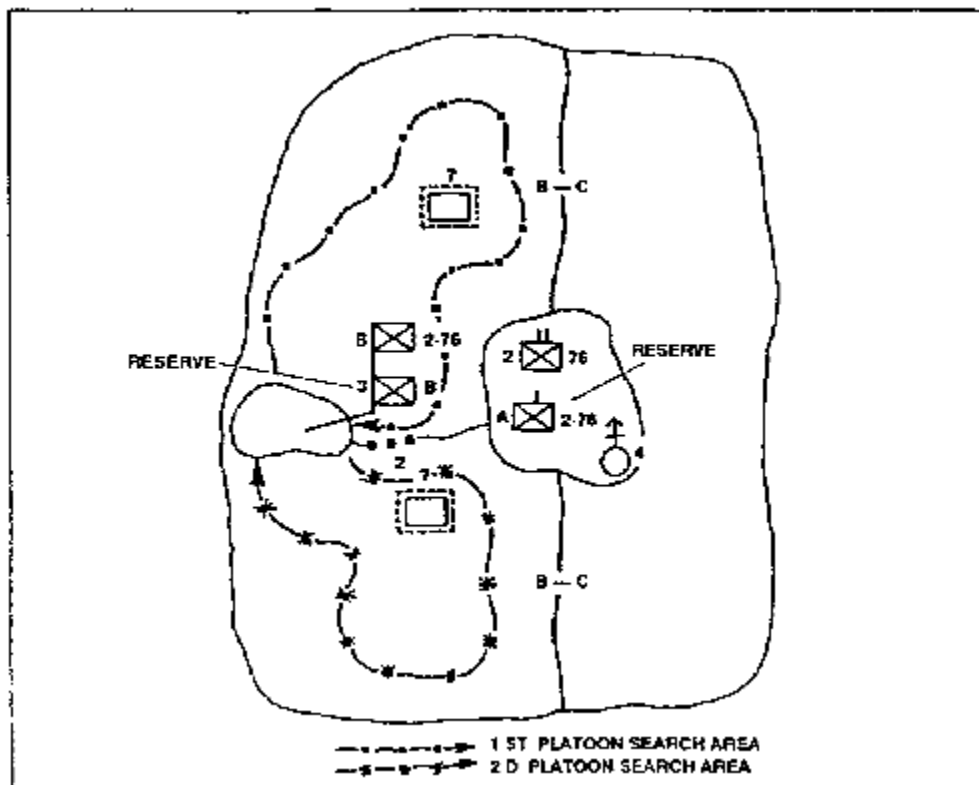


Figure 1-3. Dispersing to Search.

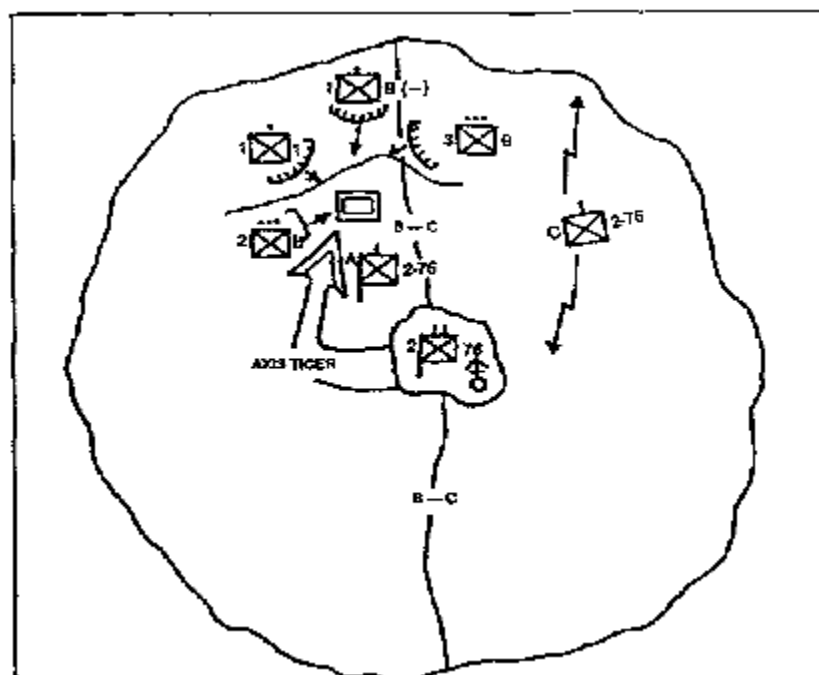


Figure 1-4. Massing to Attack.

- To establish ambushes.
- To search towns or villages.

- To secure military or civilian property or installations.
- To act as a reserve.

(3) Concept Development. The commander must consider the following actions when developing his concept.

- Finding the Enemy. Much time may be required to establish the pattern of enemy operations. However, the commander will be effective only once these patterns have been identified. Techniques are discussed in detail in [FM 7-20](#).
- Fixing the Enemy. The unit will conduct one of the following actions after developing the situation, based on the commander's guidance and on METT-T factors:
 - Prepare to block enemy escape/reinforcement routes for another unit's attack.
 - Conduct a hasty attack.
 - Maintain surveillance.
 - Remain undetected and follow the enemy.
- Finishing the Enemy. Battalions destroy enemy forces during a search and attack by doing the following.
 - Conducting hasty or deliberate attacks.
 - Blocking for other unit attacks.
 - Conducting R&S activities.
 - Employing indirect fire/CAS.
 - Conducting ambushes.

(4) Execution. The commander must accomplish the following to ensure successful synchronized and decentralized operations.

- Specify where each unit will operate, establish unit consolidation measures before attacks, and establish fire control measures for each unit.
- Concentrate combat power so that it can be rapidly applied once the enemy is located.
- Provide control, but allow for decentralized actions and small-unit initiative.
- Ensure CS assets support the main effort while remaining responsive to the rest of the battalion.

(5) Employment of Support Assets. Synchronization of CS and CSS assets in search and attack operations is harder to achieve than in most other type operations. Distances

between units, the terrain, and a vague enemy situation contribute to this difficulty. A detailed discussion of the employment of support assets can be found in [FM 7-20](#).

d. Actions on Contact. Commanders at all levels must know their higher commander's intent and concept for actions for contact so that no time is lost waiting for orders (See [Figure 1-5](#)). These engagements will often occur in small unit operations and situations where reconnaissance has been ineffective. One of the most important aspects of actions on contact is to fight through at the lowest level possible.

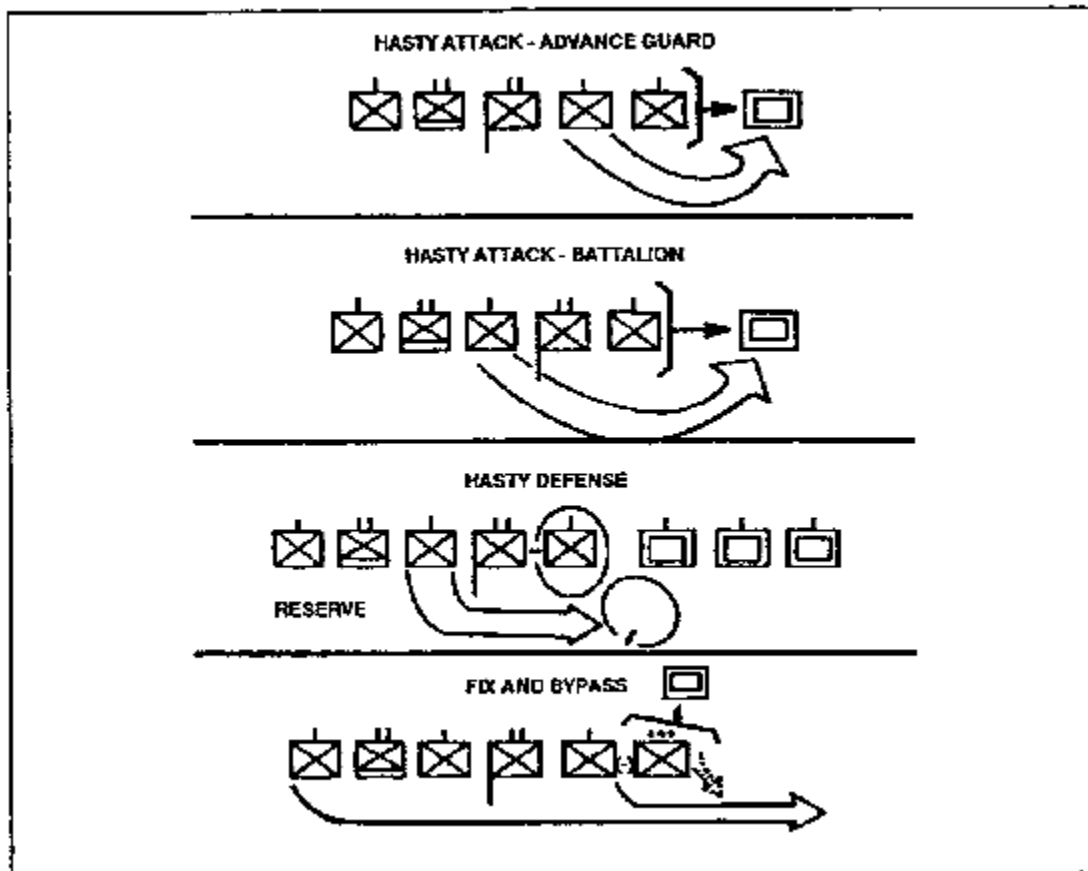


Figure 1-5. Actions on Contact.

- (1) Aggressive Action. Movements to contact are characterized at all echelons by aggressive offensive action. The advance guard pushes back or destroys small enemy groups before they can hinder the advance of the main body. When the advance guard encounters large enemy forces or heavily defended areas, it acts promptly to develop the situation and, within its capability, destroys the enemy.
- (2) Bypassing Forces. Light enemy resistance should not slow the advance; the battalion must remain mission-oriented. If the enemy is weak and a bypass is authorized, the battalion should use a covered route to suppress and obscure him while bypassing. Commanders must report all bypassed forces to higher headquarters.
- (3) Unsuccessful Encounters. The battalion can withdraw to a more favorable position and maintain contact through patrols if its encounter has been unsuccessful and it is in a

bad position in close contact with the enemy. If the enemy can be induced to follow up the withdrawal, the battalion might have an opportunity for another offensive move.

2. Hasty Attack. A hasty attack is one in which preparation time is traded for speed to exploit an opportunity. The commander can conduct a hasty attack to destroy the enemy after a movement to contact (See [Figure 1-6](#)). He can conduct a hasty attack to maintain momentum following the seizure of an objective; or, he can conduct a hasty attack to gain or maintain the initiative following a successful defense against an enemy attack.

- a. Unprepared Defenders. When the defender is unprepared, hasty attacks may be appropriate--especially when fortifications are poorly constructed/nonexistent, his defenses are shallow, or gaps exist between his units.
- b. Control. Tactical units use SOPs and battle drills to switch rapidly to a hasty attack. The scheme of maneuver must be simple and the form of maneuver appropriate to the conditions.
- c. Engagement. Forces in contact deploy and engage the enemy. They report the size and composition of the enemy force, the location of enemy flanks, and the routes around and through enemy positions. To support the scheme of maneuver and to synchronize supporting assets, commanders issue FRAGOs to all units.
- d. Technique. The enemy is fixed in position and isolated from reinforcements. Overwatch units suppress his positions with direct and indirect fire. If the enemy is stationary, he is destroyed in position. If he is mobile, an engagement area is established. If he withdraws, he can be pursued by fire or maneuver.

intensifies. Soldiers move to/through attack positions in preparation for crossing the line of departure (LD).

c. Execution. The attack begins when the unit crosses the LD. Unless the unit is ahead of schedule or other adjustments are required before the attack, units do not stop in the attack position. The commander should update his subordinate commanders before they deploy (See [Figure 1-7](#)).

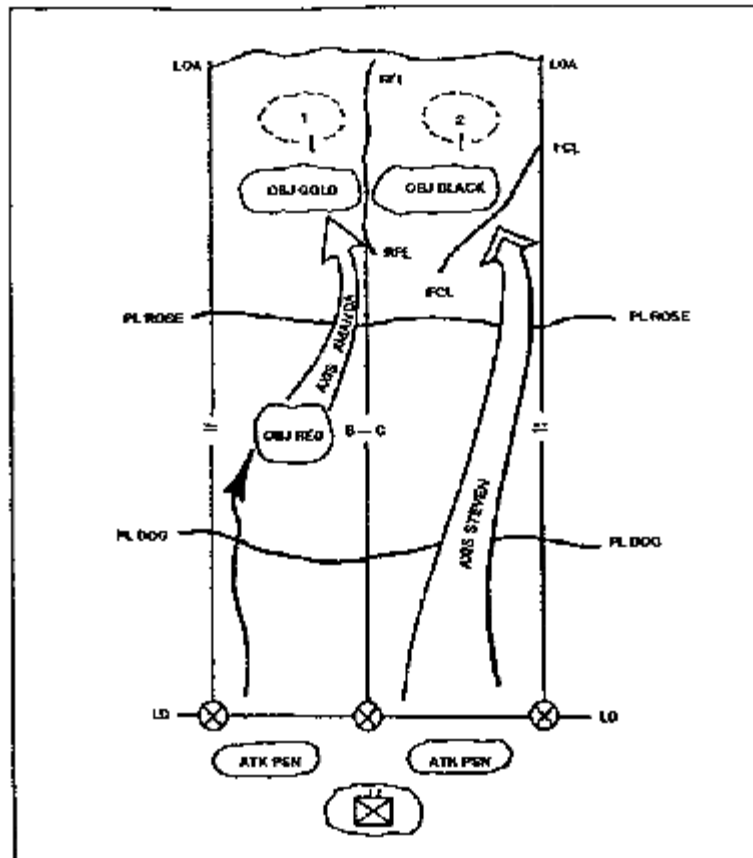


Figure 1-7. Example of Deliberate Attack.

- (1) Line of Departure/Line of Contact (LC). The LD/LC is the line where contact can be expected. Therefore, the unit should use overwatch techniques.
- (2) Advances and Assaults. The entire attack is characterized by a series of rapid advances and assaults, which the battalion supports by fire.
- (3) Momentum. The momentum of the attack must be maintained. Obstacles should be bypassed (when possible) and radio silence is used until the attack is discovered. Movement and assault plans must be simple so they can be controlled without radios. Assault elements continue without stopping on intermediate objectives. The force closes on the objective with all of its combat power. Bypassed units are reported to higher headquarters.

(4) Support Elements. CSS elements trail maneuver units by enough distance to avoid interfering with maneuver or coming under direct fire.

d. Actions on Contact. Assault units move out of, or around, indirect fires encountered en route to the objective. Incoming direct fire is returned immediately.

e. Actions in the Assault Position. The battalion assumes the prescribed assault formation as it moves through the assault position. As the battalion shifts artillery fires from the objective to other targets, the assault element prepares to move rapidly onto the objective. Suppressive fires must not be allowed to lapse, as they isolate the objective. If the battalion must halt in the assault position, and the enemy knows of the attack, the battalion deploys in covered positions, screens with smoke, and places all available suppressive fire on the objective.

f. Final Assault. The assault begins as units leave the assault position. Assault elements use fire and movement to close rapidly on the objective, before the defense can react. Direct fire weapons support from overwatch positions.

g. Reserves. Reserves remain near maneuver of the main effort--without interfering. Reserves can be used to shift the main effort or reinforce success by continuing the attack once the main effort has reached its culmination.

h. Consolidation and Reorganization. Seized and/or cleared objectives are reported. Consolidation is rapidly completed in order to reduce vulnerability of the unit. Normally, enemy defensive positions are unsuitable for occupation due to their orientation; therefore, the battalion may continue the attack or fight through and beyond the objective to a position that offers dispersal.

4. Exploitation. Exploitation follows a successful attack. Its purpose is to prevent the enemy from rebuilding his defenses. A bold exploitation should follow every attack unless the unit is restricted by higher headquarters or lack of resources. Due to combat power, logistics, and intelligence limitations battalions normally take part in exploitations as part of a larger force.

a. Battalion Tasks. Battalions attack and disrupts enemy activities in rear areas. It also performs missions which cut off enemy withdrawal routes.

b. Speed is Vital. The battalion moves as if it were moving to contact, launching hasty attacks to destroy enemy targets. It clears only enough of: zone allow advancement. Enemy units that do not jeopardize advancement are bypass and reported, or contained with the smallest unit possible. Minimum control measures are used, following maximum latitude to subordinate commanders.

c. Composition. Exploiting battalions are normally armor reinforced, forming task forces. Other CS and CSS elements may also be attached. Aviation/tactical air may be used for reconnaissance and fire support.

5. Pursuit. Pursuit is an operation designed to annihilate a retreating enemy force. It orients on force rather than on terrain objectives. A pursuit should follow any successful breach and exploitation of the enemy's defensive sector.

- a. Constant Press. A pursuit must be rapid, but not reckless. The battalion can obtain decisive results only by destroying the enemy main body. A sound pursuit exerts constant, unyielding pressure on the enemy. Soldiers are pushed to their limits and reserves are committed freely in order to maintain momentum. The battalion continues to pursue day and night. Stop, for any reason, allow the enemy to gain time, during which h may pull units together, employ obstacles, or even slip away. Pursuing forces must prevent the enemy from breaking contact or reconstituting his defense.
- b. Night. Pursuit often begins or continues into the fight, because the enemy will most likely try to conceal is withdraw by moving after dark.
- c. Techniques. Pursuit can be conducted by direct pressure or by encirclement. The direct pressure for must have sufficient combat power to maintain pressure on the enemy. The encircling force must have good firepower and greater mobility than the enemy. An ideal encircling force consists of air assault forces and attack helicopters or tactical air support.
- d. Requires Effort. The pursuit requires commanders and leaders to expend great effort. They must use their energy and willpower, act with initiative, and have flexibility of maneuver.
 - (1) Energy and Willpower. Constant combat causes units to tire and tend to become disorganized. As a result, soldiers may relax mentally. Unit leaders, at all levels, must lead, initiate, exploit opportunities.
 - (2) Activity and Initiative. Before the strength of the pursuers fades, commanders must use their initiative to find ways to conserve strength and increase speed and mobility.
 - (3) Flexibility of Maneuver. Fluid situations require mission-type orders in order to allow subordinate commanders to accomplish their missions. Control measures should be limited where practical, with phase lines incorporated for control.
- e. Decentralized Command. To simplify C2, command posts (CP) closely follow lead units and battalion commanders operate forward. Vehicles are used when possible. Moving by leaps and bounds, CPs coordinate all supporting activities according to radio instructions from command groups.
- f. Security. Pursuit requires only those security measures that add mobility and speed. The thoroughness normally associated with security is relaxed enough to facilitate rapid movement. Units may be dispersed to prevent ambushes and to prevent the enemy knowing the size of the unit. In all cases, the commander must ensure the withdrawal is not a ruse.
- g. Rapid Advance. A pursuit must be rapid. Speed often depends on engineer support, which advances with lead elements.
- h. Air Assets. Air assault assets are able to strike key elements deep in the enemy rear. Attack helicopters and CAS engage targets which contribute most to the pursuit. These actions continue until direct pressure forces arrive.

- i. Logistics. Aviation assets assist in the pursuit by backhauling casualties and resupplying lead elements. Inoperative vehicles are left behind for recovery by follow-on forces. Rapid movement requires close coordination between the S3 and S4.

PART C

THE FIVE FORMS OF MANEUVER

The five forms of maneuver describe the relationships of attacking units to each other and to the enemy. The form(s) of maneuver selected must support the intent of the commander. Infiltration, penetration, envelopment, turning movement, and frontal attack are the five forms of maneuver. Additional detail can be found in [FM 7-20](#).

1. Infiltration. The purpose of infiltration is to move by stealth to place a maneuver force in a more favorable position to accomplish a mission. Infiltration is used to avoid detection and engagement (See [Figure 1-8](#)). Infiltrating units can seize key terrain, destroy critical communications nodes, and interfere with the resupply and reinforcement of enemy positions.

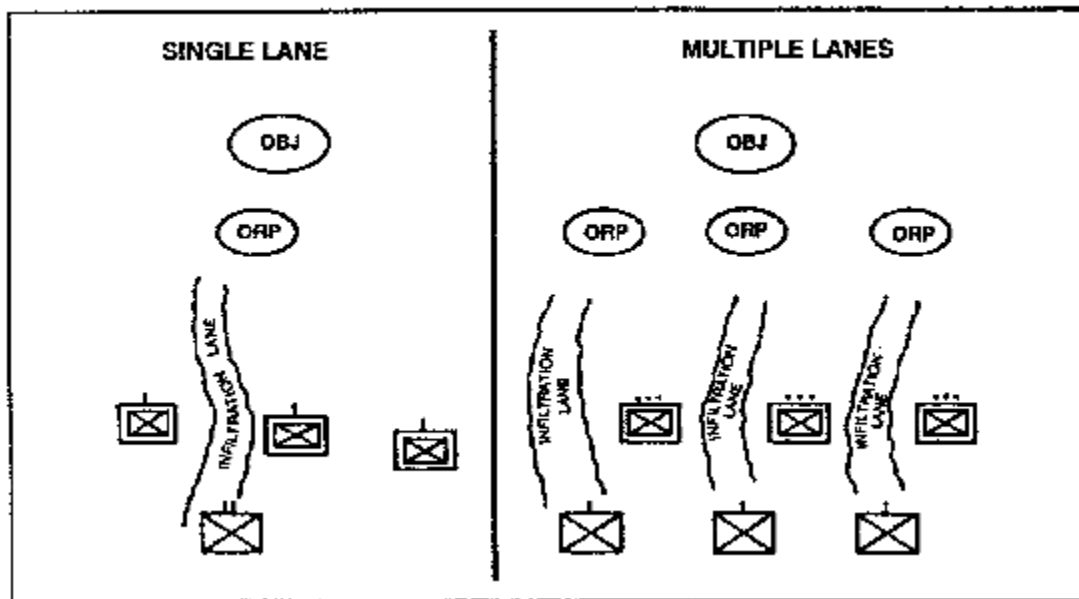


Figure 1-8. Examples of Infiltration.

- a. Types of Infiltration. Three types of infiltration may be used.
- (1) Land. Infiltration by foot is most common and is discussed in detail in [FM 7-20](#).
 - (2) Water. Infiltration by water is described in FM 31-25 and FM 31-11.
 - (3) Air. FMs 90-4, 100-27, 90-26, and 31-24 provide information for infiltration by air.
- b. Advantages. Infiltration can be used when enemy firepower discourages the use of other forms of maneuver. Infiltration can panic and disorganize forces prepared to fight to their front.

- c. Disadvantages. Overland infiltration requires a great deal of time, excellent small unit navigation skills, and successful link-up. Forces may be caught and destroyed piecemeal, if the enemy can concentrate combat power.
- d. Conditions. The ability to conceal movement enables the commander to achieve surprise. Rough terrain, darkness, and bad weather increase chances for success. Aggressive reconnaissance and routes through areas not covered by surveillance and/or fire will also increase chances for success.
- e. Training. Soldiers must be trained in patrolling and light/noise discipline techniques. Elements should have an offensive frame of mind, but ready to break contact, if necessary. Only the required equipment and supplies are carried.
- f. Phases. Overland infiltration can be accomplished in five phases.
 - (1) Patrol. Gaps are identified for use by infiltrating units.
 - (2) Prepare. Conduct troop-leading procedures.
 - (3) Infiltrate. The unit infiltrates the gaps.
 - (4) Consolidate. The unit reassembles at one or more objective rally points (ORP) and prepares to complete the mission.
 - (5) Execute. The unit completes its mission.
- g. Lane Selection. [FM 7-20](#) describes lane selection in detail.
- h. Other Control Measures.
 - Avoid roads, trails, or other obvious routes of movement.
 - Thermal imagery helps in avoiding detection.
 - Easily identifiable rally points are a must.
 - Reconnoiter and secure the ORP(s) before occupation.

2. Penetration. Penetration is conducted at the enemy's weakest point to rupture his defense (See [Figure 1-9](#)). If the METT-T analysis identifies multiple weaknesses in the enemy's position, then multiple penetrations are considered.

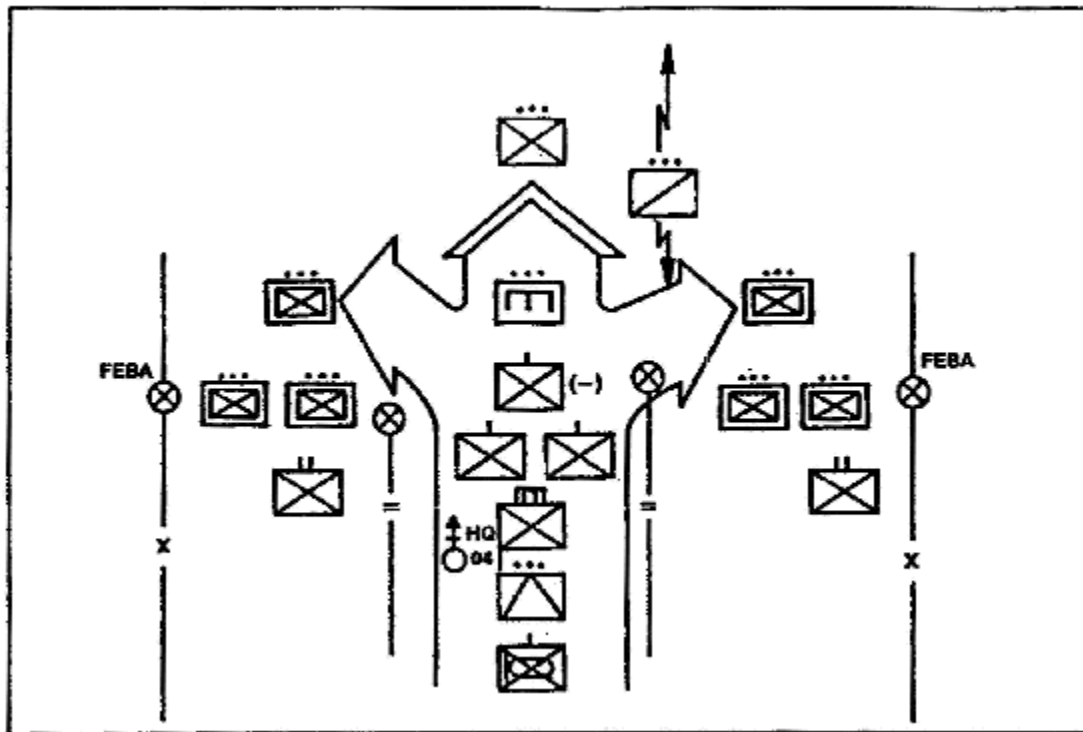


Figure 1-9. Battalion Task Force Conducting Penetration.

3. Envelopment. The basic form of maneuver is envelopment. An enveloping unit seeks to apply friendly strengths against enemy weakness by striking the enemy in the flank or rear (See [Figure 1-10](#)). The enemy must be forced to fight along undefended or lightly defended avenues of approach. An envelopment can also interdict the enemy's lines of communication, which reduces his ability to fight.
4. Turning Movement. The attacking force making the turning movement passes around the enemy, avoiding him entirely, to secure an objective deep in the enemy's rear area. This maneuver forces the enemy to abandon his position or divert major forces to meet the threat (See [Figure 1-11](#)). The selected objective must be along the enemy's lines of communication (LOC). The objective must be important enough to the enemy to cause him to abandon his forward defenses--for example, a key bridge over an unfordable river.
5. Frontal Attack. The least desirable form of maneuver is the frontal attack. The most direct routes are used to strike the enemy all along his front. When possible, companies should try to seize their objectives from a direction other than the front.

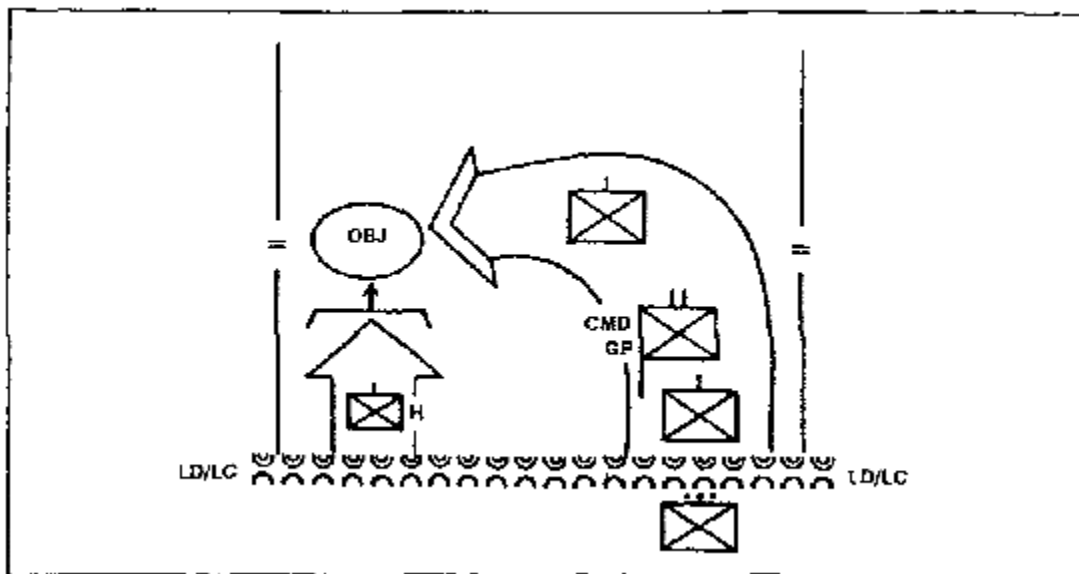


Figure 1-10. Battalion Conducting an Envelopment.

PART D

THE FOUR PHASES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

All offensive operations tend to occur in four phases, although the length and nature of each phase varies. The general phases are preparation, attack, exploitation, and pursuit.

1. Preparation. Troop-leading procedures serve as the basis for planning offensive action. Included are planning and issuing orders, preparing personnel and equipment, conducting reconnaissance, and rehearsing.
2. Attack. The attack phase may include either a hasty or deliberate attack. Most attacks consist of an approach to the objective, the assault or actions on the objective, and the reorganization/consolidation.
3. Exploitation. A battalion normally takes part in exploitations as part of a larger force; however the battalion should exploit success at the local level within the higher commanders' concept of the operation.
4. Pursuit. The objective of the pursuit phase of an operation is the total destruction of the enemy force. The battalion may take part in a pursuit as part of a larger force.

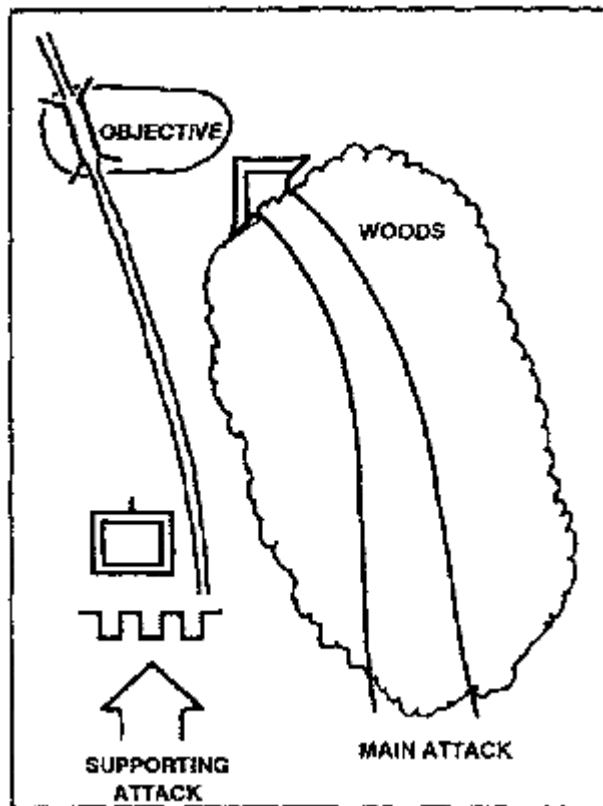


Figure 1-11. Battalion Conducting a Turning Movement.

PART E

MAIN AND SUPPORTING ATTACKS

In his concept of the offensive operation, the commander designates main and supporting attacks.

1. Main Attack.

- a. Main Attack Units. The units conducting the main attack are assigned a mission which, when achieved, successfully accomplishes the unit's mission. The main attack secures a key terrain objective or position or destroys an enemy force. Main attack elements have traditionally been assigned terrain objectives; however, the main attack may also be an attack by fire.
- b. Exploit Opportunities. In a battalion task force there is only one main attack. All other elements of the task force support the main attack. The plan of attack must contain provisions for exploiting success whenever it occurs. Commanders must avoid becoming so committed to an initially planned main attack that greater opportunities are neglected.
- c. Main Attack versus Main Effort. Both "main attack" and "main effort" are mechanisms for allowing the coordination and concentration of combat power, but they are not synonymous. The main attack is the task force's main effort at the decisive phase of the attack. The main effort is the focus of combat power at any given time during the attack.

d. Weighting the Main Attack. In planning the scheme of maneuver, the main attack must have sufficient combat power and support to accomplish its mission. Methods of weighting the main attack include--

- Assigning the main attack to the companies with the highest combat power and bold, aggressive leaders.
- Allocating additional combat platoons.
- Attaching or placing CS elements in direct support.
- Providing priority of CS and allocating priority targets.
- Positioning overwatch of support-by-fire elements to support.
- Coordinating adjacent unit or attack helicopter support by fire.
- Positioning and assigning planning priorities to the reserve.
- Locating the tactical (TAC) CP where it can best control the main attack.
- Providing a priority for CSS.

2. Supporting Attack.

a. Contributes to Success. The supporting attack allows the main attack to be successful. It contributes to the success of the main attack by accomplishing one or more of the following:

- Occupying terrain to support by fire the maneuver of the main attack.
- Fixing the enemy in position.
- Deceiving the enemy as to the location of the main attack.
- Isolating the objective.

b. Techniques. Supporting attacks place fire on the objective, and/or on known likely supporting enemy positions. Fires are used to destroy as many of the enemy's major weapons systems as possible before the main attack reaches the objective. Supporting attacks by fire should come from a different direction than that of the main attack. This forces the enemy to defend in two directions and avoids the masking of friendly fire as the main attack closes on the objective. Forces used in a support-by-fire role should be considered as potential reserve forces. Plans to move them forward to assist in the final assault or reorganization and continued operation are part of the commander's contingency planning.

c. Multiple Supporting Attacks. The supporting attack may be by fire and maneuver. In this case, one or more company teams are tasked to secure, or seize terrain dominating the main attack's objective. This form of supporting attack is used when conditions will not allow a supporting attack by fire. The task force/battalion seldom can have more than one supporting attack by fire and maneuver because it will weaken the main attack, make the attack difficult to control, and increase the chance of a piecemeal attack. However, it is possible to have one supporting attack by fire and one by fire and maneuver.

PART F

SEQUENCE OF THE ATTACK

Generally, the following sequence is followed in battalion/task force attacks:

1. Reconnaissance. Reconnaissance begins as soon as possible after the task force receives its mission. Information on the avenues of approach, obstacles, and enemy positions is critical to planning the attack. Reconnaissance continues throughout the attack.
2. Movement to the Line of Departure. When attacking from positions not in contact, task forces often stage in rear assembly areas, road march to attack positions behind friendly units in contact with the enemy, conduct a passage of lines, and begin the attack.
3. Maneuver. The task force maneuvers to a position of advantage.
4. Deployment. The task force deploys to attack or fix the enemy, if bypassing.
5. Attack. The enemy position is attacked by fire, assaulted, or bypassed.
6. Consolidation and Reorganization. The task force eliminates resistance and prepares for, or conducts, further operations.

LESSON 1

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Note: The following exercises are study aids. Print this sheet and write your answer in the space provided below each question. When you have finished answering all the questions for this lesson, compare your answers with those given by following the link at the bottom of this page. Review the lesson as necessary.

1. The five characteristics of the defense are:

_____, _____, speed, _____, and audacity.

2 Shock, initiative, and exploitation are parts of which of the characteristics of the defense?

- ☐ A. Surprise.
- ☐ B. Concentration.
- ☐ C. Speed.
- ☐ D. Flexibility.

3. The five types of offensive operations are: movement to contact, _____, _____, _____, exploitation, and _____.

4. The five forms of maneuver are: _____, _____, envelopment, _____, _____, and _____.

5. The four phases of offensive operations are: _____, _____, _____, and Upursuit.

6. The main attack secures a key _____ or position or destroys an _____.

7 Select the appropriate mission for the unit conducting a supporting attack.

- ☐ A. Allocating additional combat platoons.
- ☐ B. Attaching or placing CS elements in direct support.
- ☐ C. Providing a priority for CSS.
- ☐ D. Fixing the enemy in position.

8. Arrange the following actions in the sequence in which they should be performed in an attack. (Use 1 through 6, from first to last.)

- ☐ A. ____ Deployment.
- ☐ B. ____ Movement to line of departure.
- ☐ C. ____ Consolidation/reorganization.
- ☐ D. ____ Reconnaissance.
- ☐ E. ____ Maneuver.
- ☐ F. ____ Attack.

9. Select the correct statement from the following.

- ☐ A. A supporting attack should be from the same general direction as the main attack.
- ☐ B. A battalion/ task force conducts only one main attack at a time.
- ☐ C. "Main attack" and "main effort" mean the same thing.
- ☐ D. Exploitation operations are usually assigned to the unit conducting the supporting attack.

10. The objective of the pursuit phase of an operation is

- ☐ A. to take as much terrain as possible, before culmination.
- ☐ B. to push as far into the enemy rear as possible.
- ☐ C. the destruction of enemy lines of communication.
- ☐ D. the total destruction of the enemy force.

PRACTICE EXERCISE
ANSWER KEY AND FEEDBACK

Reconnaissance.

1. The five characteristics of the defense are: Surprise, concentration, speed, flexibility, and audacity.

These characteristics comprise the major paragraphs of PART A of this lesson.

2. Shock, initiative, and exploitation are parts of which of the characteristics of the defense?

A. Surprise.

All three actions contribute to the characteristic of surprise.

B. Concentration.

C. Speed.

D. Flexibility.

3. The five types of offensive operations are: movement to contact, hasty attack, deliberate attack, exploitation, and pursuit.

These operations comprise the major paragraphs of PART B of this lesson.

4. The five forms of maneuver are: Infiltration, penetration, envelopment, turning movement, and frontal attack.

These five forms of maneuver comprise the major paragraphs of PART C of this lesson.

5. The four phases of offensive operations are: Preparation, attack, exploitation, and pursuit.

These phases comprise the major paragraphs of PART D of this lesson.

6. The main attack secures a key terrain objective or position or destroys an enemy force.

Attacks are focused on either terrain or forces.

7. Select the appropriate mission for the unit conducting a supporting attack.
- A. Allocating additional combat platoons.
 - B. Attaching or placing CS elements in direct support.
 - C. Providing a priority for CSS.
 - D. [Fixing the enemy in position.](#)
8. Arrange the following actions in the sequence in which they should be performed in an attack. (Use 1 through 6, from first to last.)
- 1 D. Reconnaissance.
 - 2 B. Movement to line of departure.
 - 3 E. Maneuver.
 - 4 A. Deployment.
 - 5 F. Attack.
 - 6 C. Consolidation/reorganization.

These actions comprise the major paragraphs of [PART F](#) of this lesson.

9. Select the correct statement from the following.
- A. A supporting attack should be from the same general direction at the main attack.
 - B. [A battalion/ task force conducts only one main attack at a time.](#)
 - C. "Main attack" and "main effort" mean the same thing.
 - D. Exploitation operations are usually assigned to the unit conducting the supporting attack.
10. The objective of the pursuit phase of an operation is
- A. to take as much terrain as possible, before culmination.
 - B. to push as far into the enemy rear as possible.
 - C. the destruction of enemy lines of communication.
 - D. [the total destruction of the enemy force.](#)

The objective of the pursuit phase of an operation is the total destruction of the enemy force.

Lesson 2

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

OVERVIEW

Lesson Description:

In this lesson you will learn the purposes and characteristics of defensive operations. Additionally, this lesson describes the defensive framework and defensive patterns used in such operations. The lesson also lists the support assets, which must be synchronized in order to maximize combat power. Finally, the capabilities of light and heavy forces are discussed.

Terminal Learning Objective:

Action: Identify the considerations necessary for defensive operations.

Condition: Given the subcourse material contained this lesson.

Standard: You must correctly answer 70 percent or higher of the questions on a multiple-choice test covering the lesson material.

References: The material contained in this lesson was derived from the following publications:

[FM 7-10](#)

[FM 71-3](#)

[FM 7-20](#)

[FM 100-5](#)

[FM 71-1](#)

[FM 101-5-1](#)

[FM 71-21](#)

INTRODUCTION

The ideal outcome of defensive operations is to cause the enemy attack to fail and to create conditions favorable for assuming the offensive. The efforts of every unit participating in a defensive action are directed toward this ultimate goal. As a commander, it is important to master the fundamentals of conducting a defensive operation. You may expect to be assigned this basic mission, either as commander of an independent unit or part of larger force.

PART A

PURPOSES OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

1. Goal: Assume the Offensive. The defense is the commander's primary means of defeating an attacking enemy. The success of the defense will depend on the commander fully understanding and implementing the five purposes of the defense; defeat an enemy attack, gain time, concentrate forces elsewhere, wear down enemy forces, and retain tactical objectives. While the ultimate goal of defense is to allow friendly forces to assume the offense, a defensive mission may be oriented toward any of these intermediate purposes.

- a. Defeat an Enemy Attack. The immediate purpose of any defense is to defeat the attack. Other purposes, while important, are ancillary from an operational perspective.

- b. Gain Time. Defense is used to gain time for reinforcements to arrive or to permit maneuver forces to reposition in order to attack and destroy an attacking enemy. Gaining time prevents quick enemy successes that would make a synchronized defense by the unit impossible.
- c. Concentrate Forces Elsewhere. Based on his own estimate of the situation and higher commander's concept, the brigade commander decides where to concentrate his main defensive effort and where to economize forces. He then assigns missions; allocates forces, fires, and other supporting assets.
- d. Control Key or Decisive Terrain. In some cases, portions of the brigade may be required to defend key or decisive terrain. Based on the commander's estimate, he may decide to defend these areas in either a sector or battle position.
- e. Wear Down Enemy Forces. A well coordinated defense will destroy a large portion of the enemy forces and permit the commander to employ his maneuver forces to complete the destruction of enemy forces.
- f. Retain Tactical Objectives. The brigade's mission to retain tactical objectives may be ordered if it assists or creates an opportunity for the higher headquarters to shift to the offensive. The brigade defense focuses on regaining the tactical initiative.

2. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Defender. The defender has several advantages and disadvantages when compared to the attacker.

- a. Advantages. Advantages include:
 - A better knowledge of the terrain.
 - The ability to use and improve upon the terrain for protection and concealment.
 - A better opportunity to plan the fight.
 - The ability to employ obstacles as part of the overall defensive concept.
 - The ability to adjust preplanned fires in advance of the battle.
- b. Disadvantages. Disadvantages include:
 - Exercising the initiative.
 - Choosing the time, place, and focus of the battle.
 - Normally having more maneuverability and freedom to exploit success.

PART B

CHARACTERISTICS OF DEFENSIVE OPERATIONS

In order to take advantage of a defensive posture, the commander must understand the four characteristics of the defense. The following paragraphs discuss the characteristics with respect to the battalion. A more detailed discussion can be found in [FM 100-5](#).

1. Preparation. When the defender arrives in the battle area before the attacker, he takes advantage of the early arrival by making the most thorough preparations for combat that time allows. By analyzing the factors of mission, enemy, terrain, troops, and time available (METT-T), the CO gains an understanding of the tactical situation and identifies potential friendly and enemy weaknesses. He then war-games friendly and enemy options and synchronizes his concept of the operation with all available combat multipliers. Since the enemy decides the time and place of attack, all-round security is posted to provide early warning. The battalion's reconnaissance and security (R&S) operations must begin immediately upon transitioning to the defense and continue throughout the operation.

- a. The Defender Owns The Terrain. The attacker must learn the terrain by seeing each compartment for the first time. The defender can prepare positions, construct obstacles, and conceal his efforts in advance. The attacker must commit assets to learn where the defender is located. The defender initiates the fight from hard-to-detect stationary positions that provide cover from enemy fire. The attacker must react to the defender by either firing while moving or by losing momentum as he seeks covered positions.
- b. The Defender Must Be Flexible. The defender develops flexible plans to control fire, movement, communications, and logistics in all possible situations. The attacker must adhere to a planned scheme and risk destruction or, alter his plan and risk an uncoordinated effort.
- c. The Defender Must Know The Enemy. The defender must know how the enemy units are organized and how they deploy in the attack. He also must know the capabilities and limitations of enemy weapons systems and equipment. The battalion S2 provides this information, but the commander must understand it. Thorough preparation begins with sound intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB).
- d. The Defender Uses The Proper Assets. The defender organizes his defense around the weapons most effective against the principal threat. When facing an armored force, the defender's allocation and positioning of antiarmor weapons (TOW missile systems, Dragons, antitank mines, and tanks) is most important; other assets supplement their fires and minimize vulnerabilities. Against an infantry threat, infantry defeating weapons (machineguns, mortars, artillery, small arms) are integrated to reduce the momentum of the enemy's attack and to destroy the enemy forward of the defender's position. The effect of all weapons is greatly increased when they are positioned where cover and concealment reduce or neutralize enemy suppressive fires.

2. Disruption. Defensive plans vary with circumstances, but all defensive concepts of operation aim at disrupting the attacker's synchronization. Counterattacks, indirect fires, obstacles, and retention of key or decisive terrain disrupt enemy concentration of strength against portions of the defense. Destroying enemy command and control vehicles disrupts enemy flexibility and deception measures disrupt his attack. All of these efforts contribute to the disruption of the enemy's synchronization.

- a. Operational Security (OPSEC). Units maintain OPSEC and avoid patterns to hide their dispositions. Enemy reconnaissance and probing attacks must be defeated without disclosing the scheme of defense to the enemy.

b. Disruption of Synchronization. An attacker's strength comes from speed, mass, and the mutual support of maneuver and combat support (CS) elements. The defender must disrupt the attacker's synchronization and destroy the mutual support between maneuver and CS elements. This makes it hard for the attacker to coordinate and concentrate forces and fires or to isolate and overwhelm the defender.

3. Concentration. The defender must concentrate combat power at decisive times and places if he is to succeed. He must be able to obtain a local advantage at points of decision. Offensive action and the use of surprise and deception are often means of gaining this advantage. Local counterattacks may be needed to maintain the integrity of the defense. Indirect fire can be shifted to critical points to rapidly concentrate destructive effects. When concentrating combat power, the defender must economize in some areas, retain a reserve, and maneuver to gain local superiority. Most importantly, the defender must remember that concentration refers to combat power--not just soldiers. Combat power focuses on effects--not just numbers of soldiers/weapons systems.

a. Concentrate Power. The commander concentrates weapons effects by designating the main effort. All weapons and assets support and sustain this main effort. By redesignating it, the commander can shift the focus of his combat power. To weight this main effort, the commander can--

- Focus counterattack plans to support the main effort.
- Reduce the size of the main effort's area of operations.
- Assign the main effort priority for obstacle preparation.
- Give the main effort priority of indirect fires.
- Position the reserve near, in, or behind the main effort.

b. Integration of Assets. The commander integrates available assets so that their combined effect on the enemy exceeds the sum of their individual effects.

4. Flexibility. Flexibility is derived from sound preparation, disposition in depth, retention of reserves and effective command and control. The defender must be agile enough to avoid or absorb the attacker's blow and to strike back effectively. Flexibility results from a detailed estimate, an understanding of the unit's purpose, aggressive R&S and, when applicable, organization in depth and retention or reconstruction of a reserve. Flexibility requires that the commander "see the battlefield"--both physically and through timely and accurate reports. Supplementary positions on secondary avenues of approach provide more flexibility to the commander. After a good analysis of the terrain and enemy, reserves can be positioned to allow the commander to react to unexpected events. In short, sound contingency planning permits flexibility.

PART C

ALTERNATE DEFENSIVE PATTERNS

While defensive operations may take a wide variety of forms, traditional usage divides defensive arrangements into two broad categories. Mobile defenses focus on the destruction of the attacking force by permitting the enemy to advance into a position which exposes him to counterattack and envelopment by a mobile reserve. Area defenses focus on the retention of terrain by absorbing the enemy into an interlocked series of positions from which he can be destroyed largely by fire.

Although these descriptions convey the general pattern of each type of defense, both forms employ both static and dynamic elements. In mobile defenses, static defensive positions help control the depth and breadth of enemy penetrations, and ensure the retention of ground from which to launch counterattacks. In area defenses, mobile reserves cover gaps among defensive positions, reinforce those positions as necessary, and are available to counterattack key defensive positions should they be lost to the enemy.

Typically, defending commanders will combine both patterns, using static elements to delay, canalize, attrit, and ultimately halt the attacker, and dynamic elements--spoiling attacks and counterattacks--to strike and destroy his committed forces. The balance among these elements will depend on the unit's mission, composition, mobility, and relative combat power, and on character of the battlefield.

1. Mobile Defense. Mobile defenses employ a combination of offensive, defensive, and delaying action to defeat the enemy attack. Their design varies from case to case and must be described in detail in each instance. Commanders conducting a mobile defense deploy relatively small forces forward and use maneuver supported by fire and obstacles to wrest the initiative from the attacker after he has entered the defended area.

A force conducting a mobile defense must have mobility equal to or greater than the enemy's. It must also be able to form a large reserve which will conduct the decisive counterattack. Since doing so will almost invariably require thinning committed forces, a mobile defense cannot be conducted unless the temporary loss of some terrain is acceptable.

Because of the requirement to form a large reserve, mobile defense is normally conducted by division and larger formations. However, large brigades and cavalry regiments may be able to conduct this form of defense in some circumstances. In any case, heavy forces are required for the reserve, and may also be used as security forces to contain anticipated penetrations. Light forces in a mobile defense are usually used to defend strongpoints in suitable terrain within or adjacent to the area of the enemy's penetration, or in some cases, to stop the enemy during the counterattack.

2. Area Defense. An area defense is usually conducted to deny the enemy access to specific terrain for a specified time. Since, unlike the mobile defense, area defense does not promise outright destruction of the attacking force, area defense presumes some other simultaneous or subsequent operation to achieve decisive defeat of the enemy.

In an area defense, the bulk of the defending forces are deployed to retain ground, using a combination of defensive positions and small mobile reserves. Commanders organize the defense around the static

framework provided by the defensive positions, seeking to destroy enemy forces by interlocking fires or by local counterattack of enemy units penetrating between defensive positions. Both light and heavy forces may conduct area defense. When the defending force is predominately light, such a defense is usually required.

Unlike mobile defense, for which considerable depth is essential, area defense may be conducted in varying depth, depending on the mission, forces available, and the nature of the terrain. When necessary, the commander may make his main effort well forward, committing most of his combat power to the FEBA and planning to counterattack early, when enemy forces are along the FEBA or even beyond it. While such a forward defense may often be necessary, it is more difficult to execute than a defense in greater depth. This is because its early commitment to decisive combat makes it less flexible, hence more dependent on rapid identification of, and concentration against, the enemy main effort.

When the mission is less restrictive, forces are available, and advantageous terrain extends deep into his defensive sector, the commander may organize his defense in greater depth. In extremely wide sectors, divisions and corps may need to defend in depth in order to gain time and to concentrate against the enemy.

When an area defense is conducted in depth, elements in the security area identify and control the enemy's main effort while holding off secondary thrusts. Counterattacks on the flank of the main attack then seal off, isolate, and destroy penetrating enemy forces. In the extreme, therefore, an area defense in depth begins to look like a mobile defense.

In organization and execution, both defensive patterns vary considerably from the pure form. Each can be visualized as extending across a portion of the defensive continuum. Each uses the five elements of the defensive framework and must be fought in the fluid, nonlinear conditions of contemporary combat. Tactical commanders must therefore adapt their defensive arrangements to the requirements of each situation and avoid becoming wedded to rigid patterns in the design of their defenses.

PART D

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE DEFENSE.

Battalions normally conduct defensive operations as part of a larger element. Both mobile and area defenses rely on static and maneuver elements. As a part of either of these elements, the battalion commander must use the overall defensive framework to synchronize the battalion's defensive effort.

1. Elements of the Divisional Defense. Divisions fight conventional defenses that are organized into five elements. These elements are complimentary, as shown in [Figure 2-1](#). Three of these security operations, main battle area (MBA) operations, and reserve operations apply at all echelons. The five elements are as follows:

- Deep Operations. These take place in the area forward of the front line of own troops (FLOT).
- Security Operations. These actions are focused on the areas forward and to the flanks of the defending force.
- Main Battle Area Operations. These actions concern the MBA.

- Reserve Operations. Reserve operations are carried out in support of the main defensive effort.
 - Rear Operations. Rear operations are conducted to retain freedom of action in the rear area.
2. Deep Operations. Deep operations are actions against enemy forces not yet in contact with friendly forces. Deep operations prevent the enemy from massing and create, for the defender, opportunities for offensive action. To accomplish this, the defender separates the attacking echelons; disrupts the attacker's command and control, CS, and CSS; and slows the arrival time of successive echelons. Battalions may participate in deep operations IAW division or brigade plans.

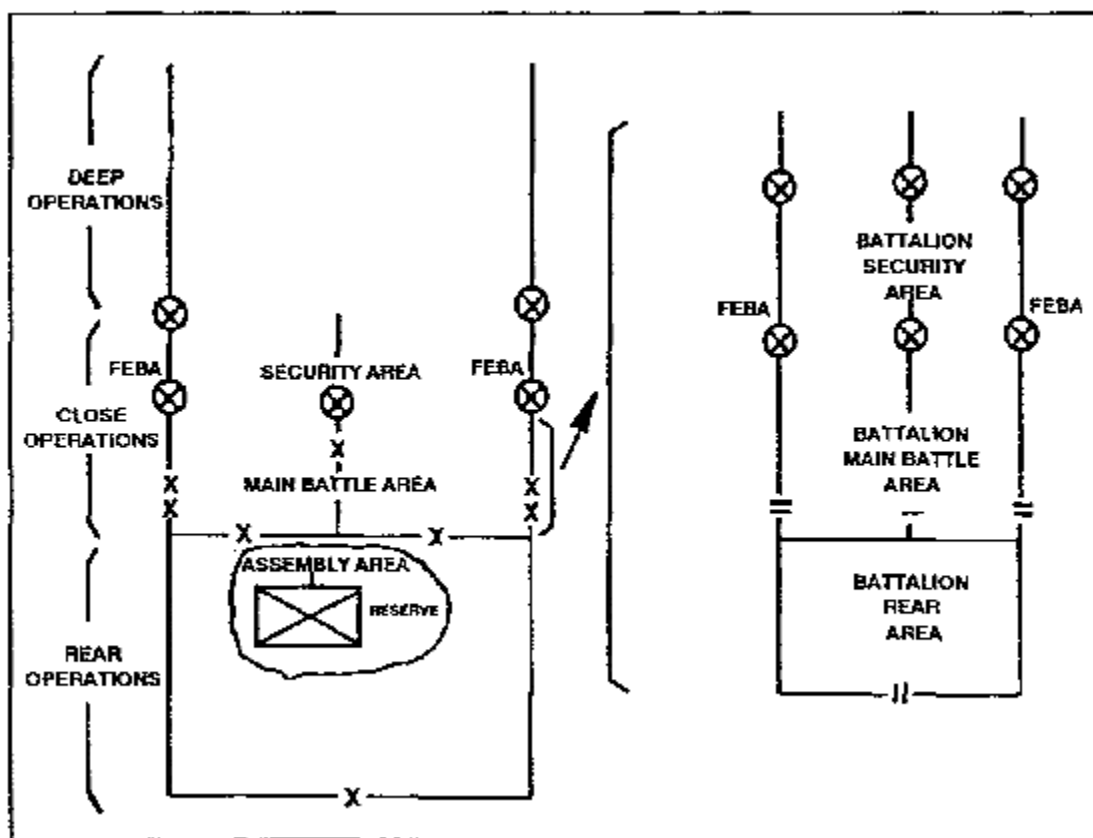


Figure 2-1. Framework of the Defense.

3. Close Operations. Close operations may include security area operations, battle handover, and MBA operations.
- a. Brigade and Higher Security Area Operations. The forward security force established by corps or division is called a covering force. This covering force is tactically self-contained. It is organized with enough CS and CSS forces to operate independently from the main body. This force begins the fight against the attacker's leading echelons in the security area. The covering force gains and maintains contact, develops the situation, delays or defeats the enemy's lead forces, and deceives the enemy as to the location of the NBA.
 - b. Battalion Security Area Operations. The infantry battalion uses a screening force as its forward security echelon. The exact size of the screening force depends on the width of the sector, the nature of the terrain, and the specific tasks the security force is expected to

accomplish. It is always tasked with providing early warning. The battalion security force is normally required to establish contact with the covering force, when a covering force is employed, and to aid with its rearward passage and battle handover (BHO). When there is no covering force, the battalion covering force might be required to move farther forward of the MBA to increase its early-warning ability.

c. **Battle Handover.** BHO provides an orderly transition between the security force battle and combat in the MBA. (See [Figure 2-2.](#)) The enemy should be unable to determine that this transition has occurred. The problems inherent in a battle handover arise from when, where, and how the covering force gives up responsibility for the fight to the MBA battalion. The battle handover line (BHL) and contact points on the ground must be coordinated and clearly identifiable to both forces. The headquarters that establishes the covering force designates the BHL and sets up the contact points to aid contact between MBA units and the covering force. MBA and covering force commanders coordinate and recommend BHL location changes to the higher commander. The BHL is shown on the operation overlay as a phase line. The BHL represents the location where control of the battle passes from the covering force to the MBA commander. The BHL is two to four kilometers forward of the FEBA, where MBA forces can use direct fire and observed indirect fire to aid the covering force in its final delay, disengagement, withdrawal, and passage of lines. The BHO takes place at the time or event coordinated between the commanders, or as directed by the senior commander.

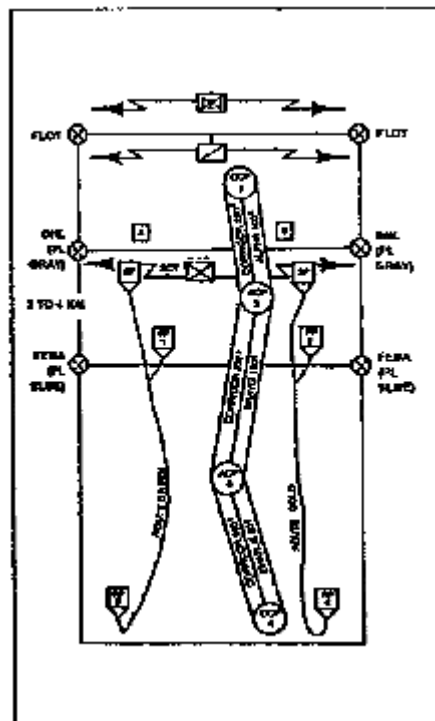


Figure 2-2. Battle Handover

d. **Main Battle Area Operations.** The brigade commander assigns MBA battalion-sized sectors, areas of operation, or battle positions, based on his estimate of the situation and intent. The brigade commander can strengthen the effort on the most dangerous avenue by narrowing the

sector of the unit astride it, or by positioning more forces to cover that avenue. He might be required to use fewer forces in minimum-risk sectors. The battalion fights the decisive battle in the MBA. The commander positions forces in the MBA to control or repel enemy penetrations. He employs reserves to halt the attack, to destroy penetrating enemy formations, and to regain the initiative.

4. Reserve Operations. The primary purpose of the reserve is to retain flexibility. Secondary purposes include reinforcing success or regaining the initiative through counterattacks. The commitment of reserve forces at the decisive point and time may be the key to the success of a defense. The commander should decide the size, composition, and mission of the reserve, early in the planning stage, regardless of the defensive technique employed. The reserve is normally positioned near its most probable area of employment. All movement by the reserve to BPs, during counterattacks or reinforcement, occurs on routes that provide cover from direct fire, and concealment from ground or air observation. The reserve can also be tasked--

- a. To Block. The reserve blocks penetrations until the enemy is destroyed or additional forces can be committed.
- b. To Prepare Positions. The reserve may be used to prepare positions on less dangerous approaches.
- c. To Reinforce. The reserve may reinforce a forward unit when casualties or heavy enemy pressure reduces its relative combat power.
- d. To Counterattack. The reserve may counterattack to regain critical positions or terrain.

5. Rear Area Operations. Many command and control, CS, and CSS units are located in the rear area. Their importance, as well as their survivability, reduced mobility, and relatively small-caliber weapons make them prime targets for enemy attack.

However, a maneuver battalion can be assigned a rear area protection mission and can conduct offensive operations there against enemy conventional or unconventional forces.

PART E

COMBAT SUPPORT AND COMBAT SERVICE SUPPORT ASSETS

The battalion commander must integrate all CS and CSS assets to maximize combat power for the combined arms team. To effectively maximize combat power, the commander designates the battalion main effort. This links each subordinate commander's actions with those around him. As the commander develops his battle plan, he must visualize how he will employ his forces.

1. Maneuver. The task force commander arrays company or team-sized forces against battalion-sized avenues of approach. Against armored attacks, the defense is organized around weapons systems that can maneuver and destroy the enemy.

- a. Scout Platoon. During the defense, the scout platoon's initial mission is to coordinate the BHO of covering force units and facilitate their orderly movement through the battalion defensive sector as battle positions. Concurrently with this mission, the scouts identify the main

effort of the enemy moving into the task force sector. Subsequent missions include screening of flank avenues of approach and maintaining contact with adjacent units.

- b. Antitank. Antitank units are employed in mass during defensive operations. Antitank units add depth to the defensive fight by being positioned to the rear of the defensive forces to cover and support by fire. The maneuver of forward company teams positioning should allow for engagement of the enemy from the flank and rear.
- c. Attack Helicopters. When the brigade employs an attack helicopter battalion, it is usually to cover gaps, to attack by fire penetrations, to provide overwatch for counterattacking forces, or to attack enemy second echelon formations.

2. Intelligence. The brigade S2 must focus on IPB in planning for the defense and analyzing the close operation to predict and confirm enemy intentions. Before the battle, the battalion commander requires specific information about:

- The composition, equipment, strengths, and weaknesses of the advancing enemy forces.
- The location, direction, and speed of enemy reconnaissance and first echelon elements.
- The location and activities of enemy second and follow-on echelons capable of reinforcing the first echelon.
- Enemy first and second echelon S3 facilities.

A detailed reconnaissance, counter-reconnaissance, and surveillance plan is prepared by the battalion's S2s and S3s to prevent the enemy from seeing and reporting the strength and composition of the battalion. During deep, close, and rear battles, the S2 continually updates the commander as to the enemy situation.

- a. Ground Surveillance Radar (GSR). In the defense, GSRs are positioned forward to participate in the early identification of enemy units and to confirm enemy movement within named areas of interest (NAI) and target areas of interest (TAI). GSRs are most effective in these roles during limited visibility. Subsequent missions include observation of flank avenues of approach and vectoring of the reserve company/team in support of a night operation mission.
- b. Other. Aviation or ground units performing reconnaissance or security missions forward of the task force also provide valuable intelligence.

3. Fire Support. The brigade commander weighs the main effort by establishing fire support priorities.

- a. Field Artillery. Field artillery is positioned by brigade to support both the battalion close fight and brigade deep fight. Task force priority targets are planned on the most dangerous avenues of approach. They are then suballocated to units on those approaches and shifted as the battle develops. Priority of fires is initially to the forward security element during BHO; on order, it shifts to the unit designated the main effort.

Close, deep, and counterfires are synchronized with the maneuver forces to disrupt and weaken the enemy's offensive action. The fire support coordinator (FSCOORD) uses the IPB process, full integration of intelligence gathering resources, and the target value analysis process to focus

fire support on the systems vital to the enemy's success. The FSCOORD focuses his planning effort on the following tasks:

- Engaging the enemy early to disrupt the cohesion of his attack.
- Supporting rear operations.
- Providing deep fires to delay and disrupt following echelons.
- Integrating fires with the battalion obstacle plan.

b. Mortars. The battalion mortars are initially deployed to support a secondary avenue of approach. Their alternate mission is to provide responsive smoke to support the maneuver of company teams between battle positions.

c. Air Support. Close air support (CAS) targets are preplanned to support the full depth of the battlefield and the transition to the offense.

4. Air Defense Artillery (ADA). ADA assets are initially positioned well forward to provide area coverage in support of the defensive preparations, the BHO operation, and initial enemy attack. Subsequent employment is area coverage throughout the battlefield with priority to counterattacking forces, choke points, river crossing sites, and other potential high-payoff enemy air targets.

5. Mobility, Countermobility, and Survivability.

a. Engineer. Priority of engineer support is normally to survivability, countermobility, then to mobility. The engineers assist initially in planning and emplacing obstacles to support its countermobility mission.

b. Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical. NBC operations in the defense concentrate on survivability. Smoke is employed in mobility and countermobility roles.

6. Combat Service Support. Logistics support to the combined arms team must be coordinated during the planning and execution phases of each defensive operation. The S4 must understand the commander's intent so that service support priorities can be established and logistics operations planned to ensure the supportability of the defense. All CSS activities must look beyond the defense to support opportunities to transition to the offense.

a. Combat Trains. The combat trains are as far to the rear as possible but close enough to respond to the maneuver units. Combat trains may be required to move frequently to support defensive operations. Operations of combat trains are organized to provide continuous support to, but not interfere with, maneuver elements.

b. Support Platoon. Before defensive operations, the support platoon brings forward barrier material. During defensive operations, the support platoon's priority of support is to Class III and V.

PART F

DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES OF LIGHT AND MECHANIZED INFANTRY

1. Types. Infantry battalions are organized and equipped to perform various missions. Although each type battalion has a specific name, they are routinely divided into two major classifications. The terms "light" and "heavy" are commonly used to differentiate between non-mechanized and mechanized units. When the term "light" is used, the speaker may be referring to any or all of the following battalions (or divisions): light infantry, airborne infantry, air assault infantry, ranger infantry, or infantry. (Additionally, various special light units may be found, such as the mountain battalion or antiarmor battalions; however, they do not exist in great numbers.) The term "heavy" may include units equipped with the Bradley Fighting Vehicle (BFV) or the M113 Armored Personnel Carrier (APC).
2. Light Infantry. Although each type of light infantry may be capable of performing some peculiar mission (e.g., parachute insertion), they have much in common. Generally, light units are designed to fight under all weather and terrain conditions. They are especially adaptable to defending strongpoints, urban terrain, dense forests, and other areas not conducive to heavy vehicle traffic. Light units can be deployed by land or sea, and are by far more adaptable to air assault/air transport/airborne operations than mechanized forces. Light units are readily able to operate as small units, yet highly suitable for integration into special and heavy force operations. The major drawbacks of light units are their austere CS, CSS, and vehicle assets.
3. Heavy Infantry. Mechanized infantry units are organized to fight the enemy either pure or with cross-attached tank units. The mechanized infantry can fight mounted, dismounted, or both. A mechanized battalion fields 36 squad fighting vehicles (plus various scout and C&C vehicles) armed with 25mm (BFV) or caliber .50 machineguns (APC). Additionally, each BFV mounts the TOW missile and firing port weapons. Obviously, heavy forces are capable of producing far greater firepower and have much more armor/vehicle killing ability than light forces. Mechanized infantry is capable of maneuvering with tanks, swimming streams, and in some cases, maneuvering on terrain not trafficable by tanks. Fighting vehicles are capable of negotiating some obstacles and withstanding some small arms fire and fragmentation, which would destroy dismounted formations. The limitations of mechanized forces include their restriction to passable terrain, tremendous ammunition and POL requirements, and transportation required for overseas/intertheater movement.

PART G

OPERATIONAL SECURITY MEASURES FOR THE DEFENSE

1. Definition. [FM 101-5-1](#) defines Operational Security (OPSEC) as: "All measures taken to maintain security and achieve tactical surprise. It includes countersurveillance, signal security, physical security, and information security. It also involves the identification and elimination or control of indicators which can be exploited by hostile intelligence organizations." Security measures can be classified as active and passive. Normally, limited visibility conditions warrant increased emphasis on security.
 - a. Active Security. Active security measures include OPs, stand-tos and patrols. The required number of OPs may vary according to METT-T or the alert status of the unit. Stand-tos include all members of the unit and are used to ensure that each man is dressed, equipped, alert, and

ready for action. Constant 100% alert is not practical; therefore, the number of soldiers on alert should be situation dependent and influenced by the need for rest and other mission requirements. In no case, however, will security be sacrificed for rest.

b. Passive Security. Passive security measures include camouflage, movement control, light and noise discipline, proper radiotelephone procedures, and the use of ground sensors. Remotely employed sensors (REMS) can be used to give warning of enemy movement. Antiarmor weapon (TOW and Dragon) sights can be used to enhance the security effort, both day and night.

c. Limited Visibility. Limited visibility security requires increased security measures to ensure that the unit is not surprised by the enemy. This can be accomplished by--

- Increasing OPs and patrols.
- Occupying supplementary positions, if they allow better coverage during limited visibility.
- Employing trip flares and other early warning devices.
- Employing thermal sights and night vision devices (NVD).
- Employing platoon early warning devices.
- Adjusting fire control measures.
- Increasing the number of troops on alert in each position.
- Maintaining light and noise discipline.
- Limiting movement and postponing all unnecessary activities.

At night the CO may employ various means of illumination to expose an attacking force. Open flanks should also be considered for illumination. However, all illumination should be coordinated with adjacent units and approved by brigade. The CO must ensure that illumination is not triggered prematurely by probes or other minor activities. When illumination is determined necessary, it is used and the battalion defends as in daylight.

2. Counterreconnaissance. Counterreconnaissance activities entail denying enemy reconnaissance elements accurate information through destruction of enemy recon or through deception. It is seldom possible to deny all information to the enemy. Based on expected enemy reconnaissance action, the CO decides what information and locations he must protect. He also considers what information would make the enemy act the way he wants him to (such as, to deploy prematurely, deploy too late, attack a false objective, or move into a kill zone). Once priorities are established for the counterreconnaissance effort, the CO focuses his efforts toward denying information to the enemy. The battalion's counterreconnaissance plan is integrated into the concept of the operation and coordinated with the brigade's plan. At times, the battalion may be the counterreconnaissance force for the brigade. For more details, see [FM 7-20](#). The concept for the defense must address the counterreconnaissance battle. If the brigade order does not provide sufficient detail, the battalion commander must decide how to defeat the enemy's reconnaissance effort. There are two general approaches to this task.

a. Destruction of Forces. The first approach is to identify and destroy all reconnaissance assets before they reach the company's MBA. To fight the counterreconnaissance battle in this manner requires

- Unity of command. All assets/units involved in this effort must be controlled by one leader.
- A well planned concept. It must include clear taskings, effective task organizations, detailed fire planning, engineer support, and detailed CSS planning.
- A mix of finders and fighters. Certain units are tasked to locate enemy reconnaissance assets. Once located, they report/call for fires. Other units are responsible for destroying these enemy units. Both groups must be mobile enough to cover the battalions area of responsibility.
- A withdrawal plan which provides for rapid rearward passage of counterreconnaissance forces and must be coordinated with all units involved.

b. Deception. The second option is to allow the reconnaissance element to move through the area in order to achieve surprise on the enemy main body. This option requires brigade's consent and the maximum use of camouflage and concealment. This technique may be varied as required, so long as the enemy is denied an understanding of the defensive scheme.

3. Physical Security for the Force. The infantry battalion may employ its own security forces, serve as the security force for a larger unit, or serve as a part of a larger security force. The operations conducted to secure the main force include: screening, guard, covering, and area security.

a. Screening Force. This force maintains surveillance, provides early warning, impedes and harasses the enemy with supporting indirect fires, and destroys enemy reconnaissance within its capability. The battalion may serve as a screening force or may employ its on screening forces, as required.

b. Guard Force. A guard force accomplishes all the tasks of a screening force. Additionally, this force prevents enemy ground observation of and direct fire against the main body. A guard force reconnoiters, attacks, defends, and delays as necessary to accomplish its mission. A guard force normally operates within the range of main body indirect fire weapons. The battalion may serve as a guard force or part of a larger guard force.

c. Covering Force. A covering force accomplishes all the tasks of screening and guard forces. Additionally, a covering force operates apart from the main body to develop the situation early and deceives, disorganizes, and destroys enemy forces. Unlike screening and guard forces, a covering force is a tactically self-contained force; having sufficient CS and CSS assets to operate independent of the main body. The battalion may operate as part of a brigade or larger covering force, but is incapable of performing such a mission alone.

d. Area Security Force. Area security operations are normally associated with rear battle operations. The requirements for this force are delineated by the HQ assigning the mission.

4. Signal Security (SIGSEC). SIGSEC includes measures intended to deny or counter hostile exploitations of electronic emissions. It includes communications security (COMSEC) and electronic security (ELSEC).
5. Information Security. Information security includes those measures necessary to ensure that access to classified information is restricted to authorized personnel.

LESSON 2

PRACTICE EXERCISE

Note: The following exercises are study aids. Print this sheet and write your answer in the space provided below each question. When you have finished answering all the questions for this lesson, compare your answers with those given by following the link at the bottom of this page. Review the lesson as necessary.

1. The ideal outcome of defensive operations is to cause the enemy attack to fail and to create conditions favorable for _____.
2. List three of the six purposes for defending. _____

3. Which of the following answers is a disadvantage to the defender?
 - ☐ A. The ability to use and improve upon the terrain for protection and concealment.
 - ☐ B. A better knowledge of the terrain.
 - ☐ C. The ability to adjust preplanned fires in advance of the battle.
 - ☐ D. Choosing the time, place, and focus of the battle.
4. The four characteristics of the defense are _____, _____, _____, and _____.
5. Defensive operations can be divided into two broad categories, which are
 - ☐ A. mobile and area.
 - ☐ B. area and static.
 - ☐ C. static and linear.
 - ☐ D. linear and mobile.
6. The divisional defensive framework is divided into five elements. Three of the elements apply at all echelons; they are _____, _____, and _____ operations.

7. Battle handover occurs between the
- ☐ A. covering force and the security force.
 - ☐ B. guard force and the covering force.
 - ☐ C. security force and the MBA force.
 - ☐ D. rear battle force and the reserve force.
8. In order to retain flexibility in the defense, the commander
- ☐ A. commits units in a selected sequence.
 - ☐ B. spreads the screening force across the entire sector.
 - ☐ C. retains a reserve.
 - ☐ D. fights a mobile defense whenever possible.
9. The purpose of CS and CSS asset synchronization in the defense is primarily to
- ☐ A. provide for the expeditious flow of support to maneuver units.
 - ☐ B. maximize combat power of the unit.
 - ☐ C. lay the foundation for counterattacking forces.
 - ☐ D. allow for the transition to the offense.
10. Light forces are best for
- ☐ A. defending strongpoints or extremely rough terrain.
 - ☐ B. occupying battle positions which may ultimately require rapid movement over long distances.
 - ☐ C. defeating motorized or armored attackers.
 - ☐ D. engaging attackers at long ranges.
11. Normally, the best defense against an attack by a tank battalion would be provided by a
- ☐ A. light infantry company.
 - ☐ B. ranger infantry company.
 - ☐ C. mechanized infantry company (APC).
 - ☐ D. mechanized infantry company (BFV).

12. Select the following statement which describes the true relationship.

- ☐ A. Counter-reconnaissance is a part of OPSEC.
- ☐ B. OPSEC is part of physical security of the force.
- ☐ C. Signal and information security are subordinate to physical security.
- ☐ D. Active security precedes passive security.

PRACTICE EXERCISE
ANSWER KEY AND FEEDBACK

1. The ideal outcome of defensive operations is to cause the enemy attack to fail and to create conditions favorable for [assuming the offensive](#).

The ultimate goal of any defense is for the defender to assume the offensive.

2. List three of the six purposes for defending.

[Defeat an Enemy Attack.](#)

[Gain Time.](#)

[Concentrate Forces Elsewhere.](#)

[Control Key or Decisive Terrain.](#)

[Wear Down Enemy Forces.](#)

[Retain Tactical Objectives.](#)

Any combination of three of the above answers is correct.

3. Which of the following answers is a disadvantage to the defender?

A. The ability to use and improve upon the terrain for protection and concealment.

B. A better knowledge of the terrain.

C. The ability to adjust preplanned fires in advance of the battle.

[D. Choosing the time, place, and focus of the battle.](#)

4. The four characteristics of the defense are [Preparation, Disruption, Concentration, and Flexibility](#).

5. Defensive operations can be divided into two broad categories, which are

[A. mobile and area.](#)

B. area and static.

C. static and linear.

D. linear and mobile.

6. The divisional defensive framework is divided into five elements. Three of the elements apply at all echelons; they are security, main battle area, and reserve operations.

"Three of these; security operations, main battle area (MBA) operations, and reserve operations; apply at all echelons."

7. Battle handover occurs between the

A. covering force and the security force.

B. guard force and the covering force.

C. security force and the MBA force.

BHO provides an orderly transition between the security force battle and combat in the NBA.

D. rear battle force and the reserve force.

8. In order to retain flexibility in the defense, the commander

A. commits units in a selected sequence.

B. spreads the screening force across the entire sector.

C. retains a reserve.

The primary purpose of the reserve is to retain flexibility.

D. fights a mobile defense whenever possible.

9. The purpose of CS and CSS asset synchronization in the defense is primarily to

A. provide for the expeditious flow of support to maneuver units.

B. maximize combat power of the unit.

C. lay the foundation for counterattacking forces.

D. allow for the transition to the offense.

10. Light forces are best for

A. defending strongpoints or extremely rough terrain.

B. occupying battle positions which may ultimately require rapid movement over long distances.

C. defeating motorized or armored attackers.

D. engaging attackers at long ranges.

11. Normally, the best defense against an attack by a tank battalion would be provided by a

- A. light infantry company.
- B. ranger infantry company.
- C. mechanized infantry company (APC).
- D. mechanized infantry company (BFV).

The advantage of BFVs equipped with TOW missiles makes this unit the better choice.

12. Select the following statement which describes the true relationship.

- A. Counterreconnaissance is a part of OPSEC.

OPSEC is the broad definition of all security measures used by the commander.

- B. OPSEC is part of physical security of the force.
- C. Signal and information security are subordinate to physical security.
- D. Active security precedes passive security.